

Remarks

Claims 1-18 were pending in the application, and were rejected. by this paper, claims 1, 5-7, 11 and 17 have been amended, and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. Furthermore, new claims 19-23 have been added.

Drawings

Figure 2 was objected to because the Examiner believes that reference number 14, which is shown in the Figure, is not described in the specification. Claim 10, however, indicates that reference number 14 is the cushioning-layer back of cushioning layer 22. Page 7, line 9, of the application has been amended to also recite this feature.

Figure 1 was also objected to because the Examiner believes reference number 7 is shown as the upper foam panel, and reference number 8 is shown as the lower foam panel. As indicated in the Brief Description Of The Drawings section, Figure 1 is identified as a top view of the interior lining component. Furthermore, the specification makes it clear that Figure 1 shows the side of roof lining 2 that would face an underside of the vehicle roof in the installed condition (see page 5, lines 21-22). Thus, reference number 7 identifies the lower foam panel in Figure 1, and reference number 8 identifies the upper foam panel. As a result, no drawing correction is believed to be necessary.

Claim Objections

Claim 5 was objected to because of the inclusion of an exclamation point. Therefore, the exclamation point has been deleted from claim 5.

Claim 6 was also objected to because of informalities. Claim 6 has therefore been amended to recite that "the upper foam panel has a smaller lateral dimension than the lower foam panel."

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-18 were rejected under § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. More specifically, claim 1 was rejected because of the phrase “in particular” and the phrase “comparatively high”. In response, these phrases have been deleted from claim 1.

Claim 5 was rejected because of the term “preferably”. The phrase “and preferably 0.3 to 0.75” has therefore been deleted from claim 5.

Claim 7 was rejected because of the phrase “in particular”. In response, the phrase “and in particular the upper and lower foam panels (7,8)” has been deleted from claim 7.

Claim 11 was rejected because of the phrase “or the like”. This phrase has therefore been deleted from claim 11.

Claim 17 was rejected because of the phrase “in particular”. In response, the phrase “, in particular polyurethane adhesive layers,” has been deleted from this claim.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-18 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,479,992 to Häseker et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,791,019 to Ohta et al. Claim 1 requires that the support layer include at least one lower foam panel and one upper foam panel which are interconnected by pressing. By contrast, Häseker et al. '992 discloses a roof soffit that includes a honeycomb support layer 1 having a glued cardboard structure (see column 2, lines 22-25). In another embodiment of the roof soffit of Häseker et al. '992, the support layer 1 consists of “a plurality of mutually bonded together corrugated cardboard layers” (see column 2, lines 56-60). Thus, Häseker et al. '992 does not disclose a support layer as claimed. Nor does Ohta et al. '019 cure the deficiencies of Häseker et al. '992. Therefore, the Examiner has failed to establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention.

New Claims

New claims 19-23 have been added to more distinctly claim and particularly point out that which applicants regard as the subject matter of their invention.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each of the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe that all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at is earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment



VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Paragraph beginning on page 6, at line 24:

The back 12 of the upper foam panel 8 has applied thereto the reinforcing mat [15] 11 and the cover fleece 20. A comparable reinforcing mat 11 with a cover fleece 20 is also applied to the front 13 of the lower foam panel 7. The reinforcing mats 11 are formed of fibres and the cover fleeces 20 are formed of PET or of a PE/PET composite. The reinforcing mat [15] 11 and the cover fleece 20 can each extend over the whole surfaces of the foam panels 7,8.

Paragraph beginning on page 7, at line 7 with the following paragraph:

The front 13 of the lower foam panel 7 is connected to an intermediate layer 5 consisting of a cushioning layer 22 and a connection layer 21 via the reinforcing mat 11 and the cover fleece 20. The connection layer 21 is arranged on cushioning-layer back 14, which faces the lower form panel 7. The cushioning layer 22 is formed of a flexible soft foam layer 16 and the cushioning-layer side facing an occupant cell of the vehicle is provided with a decorative layer 3 consisting e.g. of a decorative material and forming a suitable facing 4. The intermediate layer 5 may also be applied only to subareas of the front 13, according to requirements. The back of the interior lining component 1, which faces the vehicle roof, may optionally have applied thereto a barrier layer 23.

Paragraph beginning on page 7, at line 16 with the following paragraph:

The various adhesive or connection layers 15,21 are e.g. polyurethane adhesive layers. When the interior lining component 1 is pressed in one-step technology, the respective adhesive will penetrate through the reinforcing mats 11 into the cover fleeces 20 and also into the foam panels 7,8 and, after curing, it will form the firm composite.

IN THE CLAIMS**Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 19-23**

1. (Amended) An interior lining component (1) for a vehicle[, in particular an inside roof lining,] comprising at least one decorative layer (3) forming a facing (4) of the interior lining component (1), an intermediate layer (5) covered by said decorative layer (3), and at least one support layer (6) [having a comparatively high flexural strength], characterized in that the support layer (6) comprises at least one lower (7) and one upper (8) foam panel which are interconnected by pressing.

5. (Amended) An interior lining component according to claim 1, characterized in that the ratio of the material thicknesses (9, 10) of the lower and upper foam panels (7, 8) is 0.01 to 0.95 [and preferably 0.3 to 0.75].

6. (Amended) An interior lining component according to claim 1, characterized in that the upper foam panel (8) [is implemented such that, in comparison with] has a smaller lateral dimension than the lower foam panel (7)[, it has smaller dimensions].

7. (Amended) An interior lining component according to claim 1, characterized in that all layers of the interior lining component [and in particular the upper and lower foam panels (7, 8)] are interconnected by pressing in a one-step technology.

11. (Amended) An interior lining component according to claim 1, characterized in that the foam panels (7, [6] 8) are formed of polyurethane [or the like].

17. (Amended) An interior lining component according to claim 8, characterized in that connection layers (15)[, in particular polyurethane adhesive layers,] are arranged between the upper and lower foam panels (7, 8) and between the foam panels (7, 8) and the reinforcing mat (11).

19. (New) An interior lining component according to claim 1, wherein the support layer (6) has a flexural strength greater than the decorative layer (3) and the intermediate layer (5).

20. (New) An interior lining component according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of material thicknesses (9, 10) of the lower and upper foam panels (7, 8) is in the range of 0.3 to 0.75.

21. (New) An interior lining component according to claim 1, wherein the connection layers (15) comprise polyurethane adhesive.

22. (New) An interior lining component according to claim 1, wherein the interior lining component defines an inside roof lining (2).

23. (New) An inside roof lining for a vehicle, the roof lining comprising:
at least one decorative layer (3) forming a facing (4) of the roof lining (1);
an intermediate layer (5) covered by the decorative layer (3), the intermediate layer including a cushioning layer;
a first reinforcing mat disposed above the intermediate layer, the reinforcing layer comprising fibers;
a support layer (6) disposed above the first reinforcing layer, the support layer (6) including a lower foam panel (7), an upper foam panel (8) and an adhesive layer (15) disposed between the foam panels (7, 8) for interconnecting the foam panels (7, 8) together, each foam layer (7, 8) comprising polyurethane; and
a second reinforcing mat disposed above the support layer, the second reinforcing mat comprising fibers.